Liddy says he considered killing noted columnist

F. Post 4-18-80

NEW YORK (AP) — G. Gordon Liddy shook hands with Jack Anderson Thursday and amiably told the columnist that he would willingly have killed him had the White House given him the go-ahead and would have considered it "justifiable homicide."

Liddy, the Watergate conspirator who had kept silent until now, said he proposed eight years ago that Anderson be murdered for allegedly exposing the identity of a U.S. intelligence agent working abroad — and then waited in vain for an order from the White House to carry out the killing.

Anderson and Liddy were meeting for the first time as they sat down in easy chairs on the set of ABC's "Good Morning America" television program.

Later, at the NBC "Today" program, Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, his former White House colleague, gave each other a cold shoulder and Hunt was interviewed after Liddy left the set.

Liddy's appearances were to promote his just-published autobiography, "Will." In the book he also says he planned to kill Hunt in what he considered the likely event that the White House would want Hunt silenced to keep him from telling a grand jury about the Watergate break-in.

Hunt characterized Liddy as a posturer with doubtful credentials as a killer and suggested he was mentally unbalanced.

Liddy said he considered Anderson a fit target for killing because one of his columns had unmasked and probably cost the life of an American intelligence operative abroad.

Anderson denied it and countered that the real reason was that he was hurting President Richard M. Nixon politically.

"We were embarrassing Richard Nixon. We weren't embarrassing the CIA. We weren't exposing agents. It wasn't national security. It was political security they were worried about," said Anderson.

"Sure enough, you were a pain in the butt," said Liddy, but added: "You were seriously damaging the ability of the U.S. government to conduct foreign policy and diplomacy."

But Liddy also conceded that he did not know, first hand, that Anderson had caused the death of the operative.

"If you say you didn't do it, fine," said Liddy. "I'm certainly not in a position to say you did, because I'm not the one who developed the information. For that I would refer you to Howard Hunt."

Both Liddy and Hunt agreed that they had met with a retired CIA doctor to discuss discrediting Anderson by drugging him with LSD to cause him to behave bizarrely in public.

The doctor told them the LSD was too unpredictable to make the plan work.